

DC DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES ISSUES NEW POLICY TO EASE DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR TANF AND POWER

Effective **November 1, 2024**, pursuant to DHS Policy ESA-2025-02 (Cash), attached, ***self-attestation will be accepted as proof of both the “living with” and “relationship”***¹ requirements for individuals applying for the District’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and Program on Work, Employment and Responsibility (POWER). Self- attestation is a signed document that certifies that the information the applicant provided is factual and accurate. This policy change makes the application process much less onerous for applicants who previously had to gather numerous documents from outside sources to verify that the child lived with them² and, for nonparental caregivers, their relationship with the child.³ Additional forms of verification will only be required where there is information known to DHS that contradicts the self-attested information, such as when a parent has been receiving DHS benefits for their child and claims that the child still lives with them.

What form to use:

- The self-attestation form provided by DHS/ESA (attached); **or**
- A handwritten or typed self-attestation that includes:
 - the child’s name;
 - the applicant’s name;
 - the address where the applicant and the child live;
 - the nature of the applicant and child’s relationship;
 - a statement that the child resides with the applicant 51% or more of the calendar year;
 - a statement that the applicant is attesting under penalty of perjury that the information being provided is true to the best of their knowledge and belief; and
 - the applicant’s signature and date.

¹ To qualify for TANF and POWER, an applicant must be related to the child as follows: a parent, grandparent, sister or brother, half-sister or half-brother, step-sister or step-brother, uncle or aunt, first cousin or first cousin once removed, second cousin, niece or nephew, step-mother or step-father, or spouse of any of these relatives. If the applicant does not have any of the specified relationship types with the child, they will not qualify for TANF or POWER even with self-attestation, and would need to apply for General Assistance for Children, which does not require proof of relationship.

² For example, applicants had to provide the child’s most recent report card with the child’s name and the applicant’s address on it or two “living with” letters from unrelated persons who had knowledge that the child lived with the applicant.

³ For example, nonparental caregiver applicants had to obtain and provide birth certificates for themselves and the children, and often for multiple generations, to prove their relationship to the child.

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Economic Security Administration



DATE: October 16, 2024

SUBJECT: Verification for TANF and POWER “Living With a Relative” and “Proof of Relationship” Requirements

TO: All DHS Staff

Policy Number:	ESA-2025-02 (Cash)
Issuing Agency/Office:	DHS/ESA/DPTQA
Replaces	All previously issued memorandums or policy documents related to verification of TANF or POWER “Living With a Relative” and “Proof of Relationship.”
Summary:	Advises all DHS staff that as of November 1, 2024, self-attestation will be accepted for both “Living With a Relative” and “Proof of Relationship” requirements for the TANF and POWER programs.
Link:	https://dhs-ermp.in.dc.gov/PolicyMemos/
Effective Date:	November 1, 2024
Expiration Date:	Until superseded or rescinded

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform the District of Columbia (District) Department of Human Services (DHS), Economic Security Administration (ESA) staff of changes regarding the verification for both the “Living With a Relative” and “Proof of Relationship” requirements for the District’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and Program on Work, Employment and Responsibility (POWER). Effective November 1, 2024, self-attestation will be accepted for the “Living With a Relative” and “Proof of Relationship” requirements. Self-attestation is a signed document that certifies that the information the applicant provided is factual and accurate. Additional verification of “Relationship” or “Living With” will only be required in instances where there is information known to the Agency that contradicts the self-attested information. This memorandum details the rationale for this policy decision and includes revised procedures.

BACKGROUND

As a condition of eligibility for TANF and POWER, a child must live with a relative of specified degree who has responsibility for the day-to-day care of the child.¹ ESA’s longstanding requirements for documenting “Living With a Relative” and “Proof of Relationship” were based on high-level TANF and POWER goals intended to ensure that funds go to the custodial caretaker with whom the child lives. Documenting the exact nature of the relationship is secondary to the intent of federal regulations and can serve as a barrier to kinship families and other families in non-traditional living arrangements. This is particularly true for households experiencing homelessness or those in kinship family settings who may have difficulty providing formal documentation.

¹ 45 CFR 263.2(b)(2), Official Code of the District of Columbia §§ 4-205.15 and 4-205.72(a)

Acceptance of Self-Attestation for “Living With a Relative” and “Proof of Relationship” for TANF

Accepting self-attestation for TANF’s and POWER’s “Proof of Relationship” and “Living With a Relative” requirements reflect the District’s commitment to reducing barriers for eligible families in need of assistance and specifically helps kinship families previously unable to satisfy the “Proof of Relationship” and homeless households that may have difficulty providing formal documentation for the “Living With” requirements.

Effective November 1, 2024, self-attestation will be accepted for both the “Living With a Relative” and “Proof of Relationship” requirements for TANF and POWER. Applicants may complete the Self-Attestation form found on ESA’s website under the “General Program Requirements” section of the [TANF page](#) or submit a handwritten or typed self-attestation as long as it includes:

- the child’s name;
- the relative caretaker’s name;
- the shared address;
- the nature of the relationship;
- a statement that the child resides with them 51% or more of the calendar year;
- a statement that they are attesting under penalty of perjury that the information being provided is true to the best of their knowledge and belief; and
- the applicant’s signature and date.

A sample self-attestation form is included in Attachment B.

IMPLEMENTATION

- ESA Division of Program Operations (DPO) shall ensure all TANF and POWER applications and renewals pending verification of “Proof of Relationship” or “Living With a Relative” are informed that they can now self-attest to relationship and living with status. This requirement can be met by either submitting a signed self-attestation form or by providing a handwritten self-attestation as proof of relationship and living with.
 - Upon receipt of an acceptable attestation from the applicant, DPO shall process the case to a determination or, in cases where questionable information is present, request additional verification to complete processing.
- DPO shall ensure that all new TANF and POWER applications and renewals accept self-attestation for “Living With a Relative” and “Proof of Relationship.”

REVISED PROCEDURES:

Proof Of Relationship

To satisfy the Proof of Relationship requirement, TANF and POWER applicants must submit a self-attestation form or written statement indicating that they are within the sixth degree of the approved relationship types below. TANF and POWER households must satisfy this requirement at application and any time a child is added to the assistance unit.

Relationships are established by birth or adoption. A spouse of a relative retains their status as an eligible relative of specified degree in the event of divorce or death of the relative. Relatives of a specified degree are defined in the District as any relative, including one of half-blood, who is within the sixth degree of relationship:

Acceptance of Self-Attestation for “Living With a Relative” and “Proof of Relationship” for TANF

- Parent
- Grandparent
- Sister or brother
- Half-sister or half-brother
- Stepsister or stepbrother
- Uncle
- Aunt
- First cousin or first cousin once removed
- Second cousin
- Niece or nephew
- Stepfather or stepmother
- Spouse of any person named

Living With A Relative

To satisfy the “Living With a Relative” requirement, applicants must complete the self-attestation form or submit a written statement indicating that both the child and the caretaker reside together. “Living together” or “living with” means sharing a home except for temporary absences. TANF and POWER households must satisfy this requirement at application and any time a child is added to the assistance unit.

Verification of Living With a Relative and Proof of Relationship When Questionable

Information is considered questionable when there is information present in the case file that contradicts the relationship or living with status in the attestation. In cases of questionable information, additional verification is required (see Attachment A for acceptable forms of verification).

SSR’s should send a request for information (RFI) requesting one of the verification types listed below. If the information is provided and clearly establishes the relationship and/or living arrangement, the verification should be accepted, and the case should move forward with processing.

In instances where the self-attested information is questionable and requested additional verification is not provided, the application cannot be processed to a determination and will be denied. For joint custody situations where more than one individual requests TANF or POWER for the same child in different households or someone is requesting TANF or POWER for a child already receiving TANF or POWER in a different household, the process outlined in the Joint Custody policy should be followed.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, please contact ESA Policy at esapolicy@dc.gov.

Thank you as always for your cooperation.

Carla Drake _____
Carla Drake
Deputy Administrator
Division of Policy, Training & Quality Assurance
Economic Security Administration
Department of Human Services

Attachment B

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Economic Services Administration



Self-Attestation of Relationship and Living With a Relative Requirements for District of Columbia Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Program on Work, Employment and Responsibility (POWER)

To be eligible for TANF or POWER, a child must live with a relative of a specified degree who has responsibility for the day-to-day care of the child. Relatives of a specified degree are defined in the District as any relative, including one of half-blood, who is within the sixth degree of relationship:

• Parent	• Aunt
• Grandparent	• First cousin or first cousin once removed
• Sister or brother	• Second cousin
• Half-sister or half-brother	• Niece or nephew
• Stepsister or stepbrother	• Stepfather or stepmother
• Uncle	• Spouse of any person named

By completing and signing this form, you are certifying that you have one of the applicable relationship types listed above and that you are responsible for the day to day care of the child for which you are applying for TANF or POWER assistance.

I, _____ hereby attest that I am the

Name of Person Completing the Form

_____ of _____

Relationship

Name of Child

I, _____ certify that I am the primary caretaker for the

Name of Person Completing the Form

above-named child and that this child lives in the same residence as me for at least 51% of the calendar year. I understand that this is a legal document and I swear under penalty of perjury that the information provided within is accurate. I understand that any false statements may result in adverse action being taken including but not limited to termination of my application and/or receipt of benefits and referral for prosecution for fraud.

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____